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NJMC Supplements Kearny GIS Technology

KEARNY, N.J. – First responders in Kearny received a helpful, technological boost today as the New Jersey Meadowlands Commission presented a powerful Geographic Information System tool to the town, giving emergency workers and officials instant access to digital maps and regional geographic data.

"This technology is state-of-the-art and puts life-saving information at the fingertips of police, fire and rescue workers in emergency situations," said NJMC Chairwoman Susan Bass Levin, also the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs Commissioner. "This is another example of the Meadowlands Commission's commitment to providing outstanding service to our municipalities, whether it is through grants, technical assistance or access to equipment and information."

A presentation was held in Kearny Town Hall. Presenting the equipment from the Meadowlands Environmental Research Institute (MERI), the scientific arm of the NJMC, were MERI Director Dr. Francisco Artigas, GIS Manager Dom Elefante, Eric Yadlovski, GIS Specialist, and other MERI staff members. A tablet PC laptop computer with access to GIS information, which emergency officials can use from patrol cars, was provided to the town during the Nov. 28 NJMC meeting.

The Meadowlands Commission's GIS program is operated and continuously updated by MERI staff. The system creates maps, databases and other information useful to municipal workers. Information for GIS has been compiled from original paper maps, satellite images and other geographical documents available at the local, state and county level, such as Census data. It allows officials to access vital information such as the location of fire hydrants and hazardous materials possibly stored in a facility in accordance with New Jersey Right To Know laws.

"Through the combination of these digital maps and databases with those of the other Meadowlands District municipalities, Kearny's Construction Code office and first responders will have ready access to valuable information," said Kearny Mayor Alberto Santos. "The NJMC's technological assistance and efforts to bring the town online with GIS are greatly appreciated. We look forward to continuing to work with them to update this system for the benefit of our residents."

The NJMC has allocated $25,000 for each Meadowlands Municipality to receive the necessary training and hardware to be compatible with GIS. Another $25,000 was allocated from the NJMC's Municipal Assistance Program to purchase one tablet PC for each municipality.

"GIS technology allows us to incorporate efficient government tools into our Meadowlands municipalities," said NJMC Executive Director Robert Ceberio. "It is vital to have all of our towns, including Kearny, included in our regional GIS system. Now Kearny can tap into our high-speed mapping database and use this information for safety and other important municipal issues."

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